to improve productivity of Coconut plantations:—

(i) Integrated farming in coconut small holdings for productivity improvement.

This programme provides incentive subsidy to farmers for the following:

(a) Cutting and removal of disease affected / senile / unproductive palms @Rs. 200/- per palm.

(b) Replanting with quality seedlings @Rs. 5/- per seedling.

(c) Fertilizer application and plant protection measures @ Rs.8/- per palm.

(d) Adoption of multispecies cropping @ Rs. 200/- per ha.

(ii) *Production and distribution of Tall and Dwarf Hybrid seedlings.*

50% financial assistance is given to the State Government under this programme.

(iii) *Establishment of DSP Farm for Coconut.*

A demonstration-cum-Seed production Farm for Coconut is being established by the Coconut Development Board at Vegiwada in West Godawari District of Andhra Pradesh in an area of 179.48 acres.

(iv) *Integrated Control of Leaf eating Caterpillar.*

A parasite breeding laboratory has been sanctioned to multiply and release parasites for control of pest, leaf eating Caterpillar, by extending 50% financial assistance to the State Government.

Floriculture in Maharashtra

1667. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any action plan for the development of commercial floriculture in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

(c) the funds released to the State for the purpose during the last three years, year-wise; and

(d) the role being played by the State Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is implementing a Central Sector Scheme of Commercial Floriculture throughout the country including the State of Maharashtra. The Model Floriculture Centre is being set up at Rajgur Nagar near Pune in Maharashtra, for supply of elite planting material and for training and demonstration purposes. Assistance is also being provided at the rate of Rs. 60,000/- per ha. for expansion of area under flowers.

(c) During the year 1996-97 a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs was released to State under the Scheme. However no funds could be relased during 1995-96 and 1997-98 because of the unspent balance, lying with the State Government.

(d) The State Government is implementing the Central Sector Scheme for commercial floriculture. An area of 147 hectares has been brought under flower cultivation so far. The State Government is encouraging greenhouse cultivation for export.

Rescue of Cotton Farmers from Middlemens' Clutches

1668. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the middlemen are looting cotton farmers especially in Andhra Pradesh by denying them remunerative prices for their produce;

(b) the price of cotton fixed by the Cotton Corporation of India and the price at which the cotton farmers are selling their produce in Andhra Pradesh; and